(c) Based on Employment Market Information, the total number of employees in the organised sector was 279.60 lakhs as on 31.03.2000 and 264.58 lakh as on 31.03.2005.

(d) Highest growth rate of 1.5% in employment in the organised sector was recorded in case of North-Eastern Region and minimum growth rate of (-) 9.3% was observed for the Central Zone consisting of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

National Authority for geographical indicators for intellectual property rights

291. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a National Authority to determine geographical indicators is necessary to secure against possible infringment of intellectual property right of any community or region;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the country does not have such national authority to determine geographical indicators;

(c) if so, the reasons for delay in setting up such national authority and what steps are being taken to expedite the processes; and

(d) whether Government has made transitory arrangement in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) India has enacted the Geographical indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 which came into force from 15th September, 2003, to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods. For the facilitation of registration of geographical indications, Geographical Indications Registry has been set up at Chennai.

Non-availability of residues detection facilities

292. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that imported agricultural commodities were not subjected for the presence of presticides residues due to non-availability of residues detection facilities; and

(b) how many consignments of our agricultural commodities have been returned by other countries on account of presence of unacceptable levels of presticies residues in the past five years and details of commodities and countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Report on SEZs by MPs panel

293. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a panel of Member of Parliament has reportedly submitted the Report titled "The functioning of Special Economic Zones" on June 20, 2007;

(b) whether the panel has opined that existing rules under SEZ Act had failed to protect the farmers' interest and 'New Special Economic Zones' should be put on hold;

(c) if so, what are the other recommendations made by the panel; and

(d) whether Government propose to bring forward draft legislation to amend the Act during the ensuing Winter Session of Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The recommendations of the Committee mainly relate to usage of land, environmental measures, inputs from the State Government, replacement of Land Acquisition Act, 1894 by a modern legislation, due addressal of public concerns before the further Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are notified, management and governance issues of (SEZs), facilities in (SEZs), fiscal incentives, performance evaluation, application of labour laws, security aspects in (SEZs), appraisal of SEZ Scheme. Various issues relating to SEZs have been deliberated upon by the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGOM) and in pursuance of the decision taken by the EGOM, the State Government have been adviced that the Board of approval will not approve any SEZs where the State Governments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April, 2007. Besides, the minimum processing area limit has been fixed uniformly at 50% for multi-product SEZs as well as sector specific SEZs and upper limit of area required for multi-product SEZs has been fixed at 5000 hectares with an option to the State Governments to prescribe a lower limit. All SEZ approvals granted after 5th April 2007 are in terms of these guidelines only. Further, requisites follow up action wherever required have already been initiated in the light of the recommendations of the Committee and necessary guidelines/instructions have been issued to the State Governments.

(d) Considering that the SEZ Act, 2005 was passed by the Parliament only in May 2005, there is no proposal to bring a draft legislation to amend the SEZ Act.

Abnormal increase in cement price

294. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been an abnormal increase in cement price especially in some State;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to regulate the price of cement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) Cement is decontrolled commodity and its prices are governed by market forces depending upon factors like demand and supply, cost of production distance from manufacturing centres, local taxes imposed by the State Governments etc. The average pice of cement has increased from Rs. 158 per bag in December, 2005 to Rs. 231 per bag in October, 2007 mainly due to demand-supply mismatch.

(c) The Government has taken a number of measures to increase the supply of cement in the market to cater to the increased demand. These include facilitating import by reducing the import duty on cement to 'Nil', removal of countervailing duty and special additional custom duty, etc. Further, MMTC Ltd., a Government of India enterprise and TANCEM, a State Government enterprise of Tamil Nadu have been given a special dispensation to import cement under the provisions of Cement (Quality Control) Order, 2003 to enable availability of significant quantities of imported cement in the market. With these measures, the prices of cement have stabilized to a large extent showing an increase of only 2.67% between March and October, 2007. The Government